

LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICES

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Food poisoning -
illness caused from
foods that have too
many germs or
unsafe things.

Contamination -
When food has
too many germs
or unsafe things,
it is
contaminated.
It is unsafe.

Sanitize - kill
germs with
chemicals or
high heat.

WHY READ THIS BOOK?

Think about a restaurant where you've recently eaten. Was the hot food hot and the cold food cold? Did the server have clean hands? Was there soap in the restroom? And paper towels? Was the table, equipment or counter clean? Any place where food is prepared and served to the public must be kept safe.

Why? Because people can get sick if food sits at room temperature, or if germs get into food or drinks. "Clean" is not the same as "safe." Hands can look clean, but if they have germs on them, they are not safe. Food can smell good, but if there are germs in it that are like poison, it is not safe. This is why all food handlers, like you, must learn how to prevent illness with safe food and food service. These safe habits will also help keep you and your family healthy.

When you have read this book, you will know how to:

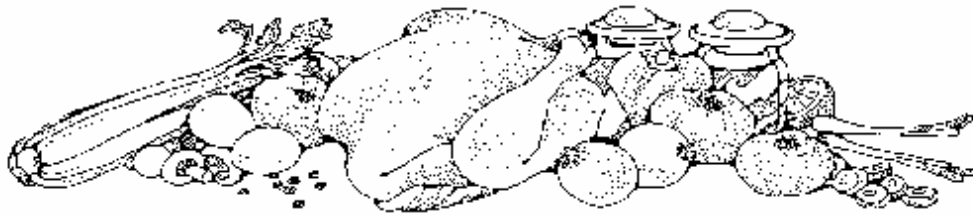
1. Prevent food poisoning – that could make someone sick.
2. Keep food at safe temperatures.
3. Prevent contamination of foods.
4. Check where safe, clean foods come from and how to store them.
5. Clean and sanitize.



Your Local Environmental Health Office has professional staff who work with you to protect the public's health. They do this by inspecting food businesses and by educating and testing workers who handle and prepare food

This booklet is yours. Keep it where you work, and use it to remember how to handle food safely. If something comes up that you cannot answer with this book, call your local environmental health office listed in the back of this book.

Along the margins of this booklet is a glossary, a sort of dictionary. You will find many words and terms that explain safe food handling methods.



FIRST AID FOR CHOKING



1. Ask: Are you choking?
2. If a victim cannot breathe, cough, or speak...
3. Make eye contact with another employee or patron and tell them to call 911 or the local emergency phone number.



4. Give the Heimlich Maneuver.
 - Stand behind the victim.
 - Wrap your arms around the victim's waist.
 - Make a fist with one hand. Place your fist (thumbside) against the victim's stomach in the midline just above the navel and well below the rib margin.
 - Grasp your fist with your other hand.
 - Press into stomach with a quick upward thrust.
5. Repeat thrust if necessary.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE SOMETHING WRONG AT WORK

Some choices:

- You can take action yourself to correct it.
- You can call your local environmental health offices to help figure out a way to solve the problem. Remember, a problem is easier to fix in the beginning before it grows too big and expensive. The health of your customers and yourself is the most important factor to think about. Don't ignore the problem.

If you need more copies of this book, contact your local environmental health office.



IS MY FOOD SERVICE REGULATED?

The food bed & breakfast operators usually prepare and serve is of lower risk than food at a full service restaurant. Therefore, many bed & breakfasts are exempt from the permit requirements.

You do not need a food service permit if:

your bed & breakfast has 12 guestrooms or less, and
you accommodate 24 or fewer guests per night, and
you serve only a complimentary **continental** or **cook-and-serve**
breakfast.

A cook-and-serve breakfast includes those foods that are prepared right before they are served to the customer. It includes foods like hot cereal, bacon and eggs, fresh-made bakery products, and quiche.

A continental breakfast includes ready-to-eat commercial products like pastries, cold cereal, dairy products, juice, hot beverages, and cut fruit.

If you have more rooms, serve more guests, or want to serve more meals than just a continental or cook-and-serve breakfast, you will need to obtain a food service permit. Contact your local Environmental Health Officer for information on requirements, or visit our web site listed on the back cover. A list of offices is provided on page 28.

Note: The term "Bed & breakfast" refers to all types of establishments defined as "restricted food service transient occupancy" in the Alaska Food Code.



YOUR OWN HEALTH COMES FIRST

HANDWASHING
IS VERY
IMPORTANT

Wash your hands often when working with food and drinks — this gets rid of germs that can make people sick.

Washing your hands well is one of the most important good health habits. It sounds too easy, but handwashing really works to wash away germs from your hands.

Remember to always wash your hands

- **before** you touch anything used to prepare food, and **before** you touch food that will not be cooked.
- **after** you work with **raw** meat, fish and poultry.
- **after** you handle trash and take out garbage.

The best way to wash your hands is:

1. Wet your hands with warm water.
2. Use soap.
3. Rub your hands briskly together to loosen any dirt and germs.
Pay special attention to your fingernails where germs can hide.
Take plenty of time – 20 seconds.
4. Rinse your hands under clean warm water.
5. Dry your hands on a paper towel.



KEY POINTS

All of the information you have learned will help you, your guests, and your family stay healthy. Take this time to review the key ideas.

1. Wash your hands often, and wash them well.
2. Work only when you are healthy, not when you are sick.
3. Prevent food poisoning by keeping food out of 41° F and 140° F.
4. Cook foods until they are “done” and have reached the required temperatures.
5. Keep food safe from cross contamination with careful storage and sanitizing.
6. Store chemicals for cleaning and pest control away from food, utensils and equipment.
7. Keep your workplace clean and safe. This will help keep you safe and well.



You may see a problem at work and when you check this book you learn the right way to manage it. You will have to decide what to do next. You have some choices.



Some of the ways to keep pests out are:

- Clean the entire place often on a regular schedule;
- use screendoors, and cover small holes where mice can get in;
- cover garbage with lids that fit well and remove garbage often,
- and keep the areas around garbage containers clear of trash and litter.



If pests become a real problem, a licensed pest control service may need to help solve it. If food workers have to use pesticides, **be very careful** with them. Pesticides are poison that kill rodents and insects, but they can also poison humans. Read the directions on the can or box. Be sure you understand how to use pesticides.

Before using pesticides, put away all food, and cover the work surfaces. Be sure that the pesticides you use are approved for use around food. Let your local environmental health office help you deal with pest control questions or call 1-800-478-2577.



Bacteria – A germ with only one cell. There are many different kinds; but many can cause illness when they grow and multiply.

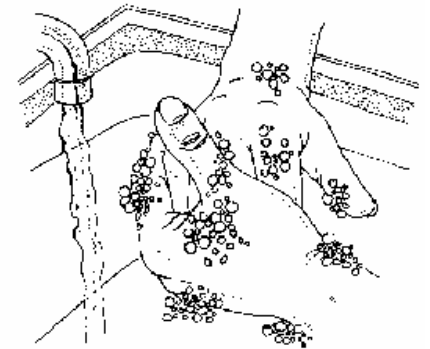
Virus – A germ that can live inside of a cell. If given the chance, viruses will multiply enough to cause disease. While some dead viruses can be used to fight disease, there really are no “good” viruses. Soap and hot water will wash away viruses.

Food borne illness – Sickness from eating food that was not safe; food poisoning.

It's also **really** necessary to wash your hands

- after you go to the bathroom (use the toilet); both men and women must do this, and it is very important!
- **after** you eat.
- **after** you touch your face, hair, or body.
- **after** you blow your nose, **after** you cough or sneeze, because you must cover your mouth.

Wash your hands after any break; and if you smoke, wash your hands afterwards.



Your kitchen should have a sink you can use for handwashing with hot water, soap and paper towels. Do not use your apron or dish towels to dry your hands.

Germs, such as **bacteria** and **viruses**, grow easily, so think of your hands as always “contaminated.” Just because they look clean does not mean they are clean. Germs are too tiny to see with your eyes. If you do not wash your hands in the right way, your hands can put germs in food which gets eaten by your customers. They may then get sick from these germs. This is called “**food borne illness**” or “food poisoning.”



WORK ONLY
WHEN YOU
ARE WELL

Hepatitis A – a virus that causes liver disease. It spreads when someone has the virus in the feces (or poop). The viruses can get on hands, and then on to food that another person eats. This is one reason to wash your hands well after using the toilet!

If you feel sick, use caution. Your germs can easily spread when you sneeze and cough, and when you touch food, dishes, counters, utensils, forks, knives and spoons, pots, pans, and other people.

- Do not work if you have a fever.
- Do not work if you have diarrhea.
- Do not work if you are throwing up (vomiting).
- Do not work if you have **Hepatitis A**.
- Do not work with foods if you have an **infected** cut, a burn or a sore on your hand. If the sore is not infected, cover it with a bandage and wear a rubber or plastic glove.
- If someone at home is sick, be sure to wash your hands carefully before you start work.

You want to **look clean** and **be clean** when you are at work. Your clothes must be clean, and your apron or uniform should be fresh.

TAKE CARE OF
HOW YOU
LOOK AND
HOW YOU ACT

As you know, it is not healthy to smoke or use any form of tobacco. If you use tobacco, do not smoke or chew it while you are working or when you are near food or dishwashing areas. Smoke only while you are on a break away from any food prep or storage areas. After you smoke, **wash your hands** before you return to work.

Keep your hair clean and neat. For your safety wear it close to your head, tied back, in a net or under a hat.



DON'T SET
IT DOWN
-PUT
IT AWAY!

There should be a daily schedule for cleaning so that no area is forgotten. Complete cleaning of walls, ceilings, and mopping and sweeping of floors should be done when there is the least amount of food around, such as after closing or between busy times. However, you should clean work surfaces, tables, and equipment as they are used. Cleaning as you go will help reduce the chance for cross contamination. You and the other employees will be safer too if everything is kept clean and in the proper place.

CLEANING
NEVER
STOPS

After cleaning, wash your hands before handling food.



PESTS

Flies, weevils, and mice (voles) are some of the pests that can get into a food business in Alaska. Don't let them in, and don't let them eat.



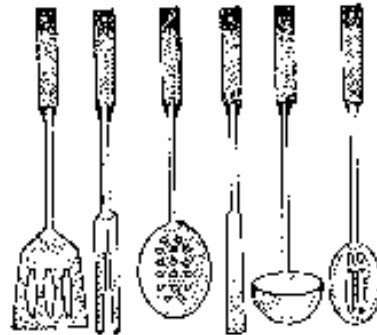
Now that all items are clean and **dry**, put them away in storage areas that are also clean and dry. This will protect them from contamination. Keep equipment and utensils off of the floor, away from drains, water lines and open stairs. Put things away carefully and quickly; do not let them sit on counters and tables where they will be handled and moved around.

Cups and glasses should be put away upside down on clean surfaces. When you pick them up again, do not touch the rims. When you put away eating utensils (forks, spoons and knives), touch only the handles, and protect the parts that contact food.

A good habit to practice at work and at home is to handle utensils, dishes and glassware as little as possible to prevent the transfer of germs.

Utensils that are in continuous use may be stored in the food with the handle sticking out of the food.

Or, they can be stored clean and dry between uses.



WHAT MAKES PEOPLE SICK FROM FOOD?

FOOD BORNE ILLNESS

Potentially hazardous – Possibly unsafe.
Some foods can become unsafe if they are left too long at room temperature.

Danger Zone -
Temperature of food between 41° F (5° C) and 140° F (60° C).
(see page 11.)

People can get sick when the food they eat has germs. Germs cause food borne illness or food poisoning. Some foods are more likely than others to grow germs that cause food poisoning; these are called **potentially hazardous** foods. Germs grow easily in foods like meat, fish, poultry and milk; they grow fast in refried beans, cooked rice and baked potatoes. These are all foods that are moist or damp, and they have protein that the germs need to grow. Germs also grow well in the “**Danger Zone**.”

It is part of your job to protect the food to stop germs from growing, **so that no one will get food poisoning.**

- First, wash your hands well.
- Second, be sure that the food is wholesome and protect it from germs.
- Third, keep foods out of the "DangerZone".



Dairy – Milk and foods made from milk, like cream, cottage cheese, soft cheese; foods that are used instead of milk products, like liquid “non-dairy” creamer.

Parasite – A tiny animal that lives inside other animals.

There are different kinds of germs; **bacteria** are the most common. They are everywhere, they grow fast, and they may spoil food or cause food borne illness. Some bacteria make poison. Almost always the food looks and smells good, but it may have enough bacteria to make someone sick. (Two examples of this are ham that has not been kept cold enough, and sausage gravy that has not been kept hot enough.) One kind of bacteria that you may hear about is **Salmonella**; it is not named for a fish; in fact, it’s not found in fish at all. It is in dairy foods, poultry and eggs, and it can cause very serious food poisoning.

A **virus** is another kind of germ that causes food poisoning; some viruses can travel through the air, in liquids and foods that a sick person touches.

Hepatitis A is spread by a virus. Someone can have the virus and not know it. When a food worker with the virus does not wash her or his hands well after using the toilet, the virus is carried to the food the worker handles. This is one reason there is a law that all food workers **must** wash their hands. The most common food borne illnesses are caused by viruses.

Parasites are tiny worms or bugs that live in fish and meat. They die if they are cooked long enough.

If you keep food very hot or very cold, out of the “Danger Zone,” germs will not grow.

Chemicals, such as fly strips or cleaners, can cause some food poisoning. You must be sure to keep all chemicals away from food.



Dishes, utensils and equipment that touch food should be **washed, rinsed** and **sanitized**. These are the five steps for the right way to wash dishes by hand:

1. Scrape leftover food and grease from the dishes and throw it away.
2. In the **first sink**, wash the dishes with clean hot water and detergent.
3. In the **second sink**, rinse them with clean warm water.
4. In a third **sink**, if you have one, sanitize the dishes to destroy bacteria. If you only have 2 sinks, drain the rinse sink and fill it with sanitizer. A sanitizing solution can be made by adding one teaspoon of unscented, liquid household bleach for each gallon of warm water in the sink. You need to leave the dishes in the sanitizer for at least 30 seconds. Don’t just dip them in.
5. Air dry the dishes and utensils. Do not use a towel to dry them. A towel can spread any germs from one dish to another.

If you use a dishwasher, use thermal test strips to ensure that plate surfaces reach 160 ° F by the end of the cycle. If not, you must wash, rinse and sanitize by hand. There are 3 steps you must follow when washing dishes by machine:

1. Scrape leftover food and grease from the dishes and throw it away. Pre-rinse, if required.
2. Load dishes into the machine and run the full cycle. Make sure plate surfaces reach 160 ° F by the end of the cycle.
3. Air dry the dishes and utensils. Do **not** use a towel to dry them.

Restaurants supply businesses should have 160 ° thermal test strips that you can put on plates. These strips turn black when the temperature reaches 160 ° F.

THE RIGHT WAY TO WASH DISHES BY HAND

THE RIGHT WAY TO WASH DISHES IN A DISHWASHER



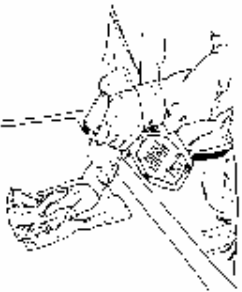
Sanitizers – Very strong chemicals that kill germs. A good sanitizer is chlorine bleach.

Pesticides – “Cide” means kill. These chemicals kill pests.

**HOW TO
GET
IT CLEAN
AND KEEP
IT CLEAN**

Wiping cloths – Cotton cloth with finished edges that do not come loose. Strong enough to be sanitized after each use and to be washed often in detergent.

- Keep all chemicals away from food. You above food, or above any area where you fix must put them **below** food, never on a shelf food.
- Keep all chemicals in the bottles or boxes they come in. If you put them in a different container, label them clearly. Be sure all your spray bottles have correct labels on them.



- Use **wiping cloths** to clean counter tops, tables, cutting boards and equipment. Rinse the wiping cloth in a sanitizing water mix of **1/4 teaspoon unscented, household liquid bleach and one quart of water**; do not add soap to this mix. (If you use another kind of sanitizier, be sure it is registered by EPA. Use it exactly as the label says.) Change the sanitizing mix often; do not let it become dirty.
- Clean and sanitize whenever there is a chance of cross contamination. Sanitize at the start and again at the end of the work day. Clean up any spills.
- Wash, rinse and sanitize each surface that touches food, for example, food processor or cutting boards. Sanitize equipment after each use. Follow the directions on the equipment that may need to be taken apart, so that you can get into all the spaces where germs can grow.



**WHAT TO
DO IF YOU
OR A
CUSTOMER
GETS SICK
FROM FOOD**

When people get sick from food, they may feel like they want to throw up (nausea), they may throw up (vomit), they may have chills, cramps (pain in their belly), loose bowels (diarrhea); they may have a fever.

Here is what you must do right away if you or a customer gets sick from food:

- Call your local DEC Environmental Health office or Municipality of Anchorage.
- Save the food that may be causing the sickness. Do not serve that food. Do not throw out any food until the environmental health office tells you to. Mark it clearly and put it in the refrigerator.

You should report all food borne illnesses - those at work, at home, at church, on picnics. Someone from the environmental health office will help you to find out how it happened, and how to prevent it in the future.

See page 27 for what to do if someone is choking.



FOOD TEMPERATURES

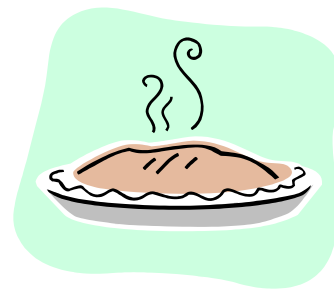
Temperature – There are two different ways to measure temperature. In this book when you see F, read “Fahrenheit”. That is the way the United States measures temperature; freezing equals 32° F and boiling water equals 212° F. When you see C, read “Celsius,” (“sell-see-us”), or “Centigrade.” That is the way many countries measure temperature; freezing equals 0° C and boiling water equals 100° C. To change Fahrenheit to Celsius, subtract 32 from the Fahrenheit temperature and divide by 1.8. To convert from Celsius to Fahrenheit, multiply the Celsius degrees by 1.8

When you eat out, you eat foods that are made by someone else. You trust them to make it safe for you to eat.

Now you are preparing food for other people, and they trust you to do all that you can to keep them from getting sick.

You need to prepare the food carefully that you will serve. You must wash raw vegetables; you must cook, freeze and defrost food at the right temperatures.

You must keep germs that are already in the food from growing and causing food poisoning. **Washing your hands carefully, and cooking foods the right way, are the most important things you can do to help keep your customers healthy.** Be sure you do these things at work and at home. Your good habits will keep you, your customers and your family safe.



KEEP FOODS SAFE FROM CONTAMINATION

Bulk foods – Foods sold in large amounts in big containers.

- Wash your hands before handling food.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize the cutting surface and all the utensils and knives every time you finish with a job or between preparing different foods.
- Use utensils to mix food. If you must use your hands, wash them carefully.
- Use a clean spoon or fork to taste food and do not reuse it unless you clean and sanitize it.

You need to be careful with **bulk foods**.

- Store bulk foods in clean, covered bins and containers.
- You and customers should use utensils with bulk foods. Tongs and scoops work well.

A CLEAN WORKPLACE IS SAFER

Detergents – Cleaning powders and liquids that work like soap, but are made in a different way; they have chemicals in them that are not in soap.

It takes more than soap and water to keep a food business clean and safe. It also takes chemicals and care to use them the right way. You want to be safe and you want to get the job done in a safe way for your customers. Some of the chemicals you will need are **detergents, sanitizers** and **pesticides**. These help stop germs dead in their tracks.

- Follow what the directions say for using chemicals. Read the labels to know when to use them and how much to use. **Be sure you really understand the directions!**



KEEP FOODS SAFE FROM CROSS CONTAMINATION

Cross contamination – Food that is contaminated can pass germs to other food. Even when the worker has clean hands, this can happen when surfaces and utensils have germs on them.

As a food handler, you must prevent **cross contamination**. Cross contamination happens when germs from raw or unclean foods get into foods that are ready to serve or that will not be cooked again before you serve them. Here are some important ways that you can prevent cross contamination:

- In the refrigerator: Don't let raw meat, fish or poultry drip onto foods that will not be cooked before serving.
- Wash your hands between handling raw meat and foods that will not be cooked before eating.
- Store raw meat, fish, and poultry on the lower shelves of the refrigerator.
- Never store foods that will not be cooked before serving in the same container as raw meat, fish, or poultry.
- Use a hard cutting surface or a board, with no splits or holes where germs can collect. It is easier to really clean that kind of surface.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize the cutting surface and all the utensils and knives **every** time you finish cutting raw meat, fish, or poultry.



TEMPERATURE CONTROL

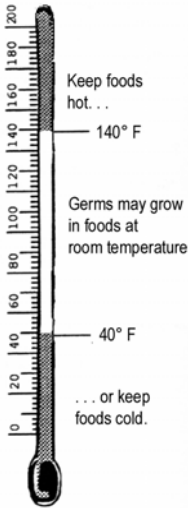
This section is about how to kill germs with heat during cooking and how to stop their growth by keeping the food hot or cold. This is called **temperature control**, and you need thermometers to check food temperatures. There are special thermometers to check foods; there are also special thermometers to check refrigerator temperatures

Bacteria and other germs, need time, food and moisture grow; but they generally won't grow when the temperature of the food is **colder than 41° F (5° C) or hotter than 140° F (60° C)**. Between 41° F and 140° F is called the **“Danger Zone.”** Keep potentially hazardous foods out of the “Danger Zone!” When food is left in the “Danger Zone”, bacteria can grow quickly, and make poisons that can make your customers and family very sick.

Wash your hands. Then take the food to be fixed from storage, the stove, the cooler or freezer. Take a little at a time, and keep the rest hot or cold until you are ready to work with it. Prepare potentially hazardous foods just before you need them. Don't let the temperature of the food stay in the “Danger Zone”.

THE “DANGER ZONE”

PREPARING FOOD



COOKING
FOOD

Metal stem thermometer –
It measures the temperature of foods. It has a round top with a long pointed sensor made of steel to stick into the food. Do not use any other kind of thermometer to test the temperature of food.

WHEN IS THE
COOKED FOOD
SAFE?

Thermostat –
Something that can be set to control the temperature of an oven, a freezer, a cooler, or a heater. Once you set it, it will keep the unit hot or cold at the same temperature (unless it is broken).

Use a **metal stem thermometer** to check temperatures while cooking food to make sure that it gets done all the way inside. Different foods have to reach different temperatures to be done or safe. The metal stem thermometer measures the inside, or internal, temperature of the food. A thermometer that works best shows a range of **0° F to 220° F** (32° C to 104° C). The only way you can be sure that the food is cooked enough is to use a properly calibrated metal stem thermometer placed in the center of the food, even if you also use a **thermostat** to control the temperaure in the oven.

Calibrate your thermometer after using it with very hot or very cold foods, afterdropping it, and on a regular basis.

- Stick sensing tip in a container of 50/50 water to ice.
- Make sure the tip does not touch the side or bottom of the container.
- Wait 4 or 5 minutes or until the needle is steady.
- Turn the nut under the dial until the needle reads 32° F (0° C).

Here are a few examples of potentially hazardous food and how hot they must be to be safe. They can be hotter, but they must be at least this hot to kill germs:

- Game, poultry and all stuffed meats: 165° F (74° C), including poultry sausage
- Pork and Hamburger, including pork sausage and bacon: 155° F (68° C)
- Other beef and all other foods: 145° F (63° C)



GOOD FOOD
NEEDS GOOD
STORAGE

Galvanized –
A steel container coated with the zinc, a metal that prevents rust.

- Keep all foods off of the floor.
- Rotate the stock by storing foods so you can use older food first. “First in, first out” is a good rule to follow.
- Cover, label and date dry foods.
- Store foods away from cleaners and poisons.
- Be careful about storing food in **galvanized** cans or other containers with metal coatings. (Some foods can “pull off” the metal and that can cause poisoning.) If plastic bags are used, they must be approved for food use. Don't use garbage bags to store food.

Take special care of foods that go in the refrigerator or freezer.

- Store food in clean, safe containers that are labeled, unless the contents are readily identifiable.
- Check the temperature: Freezers need to be at least 0° F (-18° C).
- Put **raw** meat on the lowest shelf, and unwashed food **below** cooked or ready-to-eat food.
- Refrigerators need to be 41° F (5° C) or colder. Vacuum packed seafood must be kept at 38° F (3° C) or colder.

Remember the “Danger Zone” begins above 41° F. Be sure that thermometers in the refrigerators are accurate.

CHECK YOUR
WATER
SUPPLY

- If you're on a public water supply system, your water is already checked often. You don't need to do anything else.
- If you have a private water source you should check your water every 3 to 6 months to be sure it is safe. Call a water testing lab for help on how to do this.



USE SAFE WATER AND WHOLESOME FOOD

Food Operation -
Includes all types of food services, food processors, and markets.

WHERE DID THAT FOOD COME FROM?

Certification –
Legal proof that something has been inspected and approved as safe.

Adulterated –
Something unneeded has been added or has grown in the food to contaminate it.

You want all the food in your food operation to be healthy and safe right from the start. This section talks about where the food comes from, how to check it, how to store it and how to handle it. It also tells you how to make sure your water is safe.

Use food that comes from sources that are approved by the state's environmental health agency - that's the law. Look for "USDA" on meats. Look for "Pasteurized" on milk. Look for **certification** numbers on the package of shellfish. Canned foods, fresh foods and dairy products must come from companies, brokers or dairies that have been inspected and are clean.

You cannot sell food that has been prepared at someone else's home. Food for the public must be prepared in a kitchen approved for that purpose. Exceptions are homemade jam, jelly and fruit syrups that are prepared by the bed & breakfast operator.

- Check the food as it comes in. It's a good idea to write the date on it before you store it.
- Look for unsafe or **adulterated** foods. Moldy food, smelly meat, damaged or swollen cans are not safe to use. If you are not sure, get rid of it. Remember the rule: "If in doubt, throw it out."

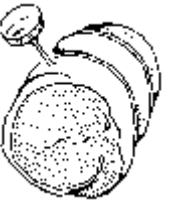


Stuffed meats – Meat, poultry or fish that has a hole or is wrapped around a filling of soft food, like bread or rice mixed with liquids, then cooked together. Stuffed meats take longer to cook safely than unstuffed meats.

Trichinosis – A disease caused by eating a parasite, a worm, found in pork that is raw or undercooked. It causes pain, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

You must place the thermometer in the thickest part of the meat or in the center of the food to get a true reading. (Do not touch a bone with the stem of the thermometer.)

All game, poultry, all food made from poultry, all **stuffed meats**, and the stuffing in them must reach 165° F or hotter to destroy Salmonella and other bacteria.

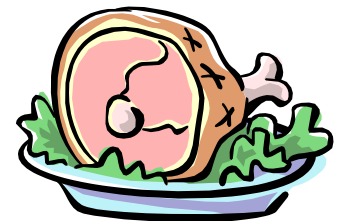


Hamburger (ground beef) must be cooked to 155° F. This includes all kinds of hamburger such as taco meat and meatloaf, as well as hamburger patties.

Pork and all foods made from pork must cook to at least 155° F to prevent **trichinosis**, a very serious illness.

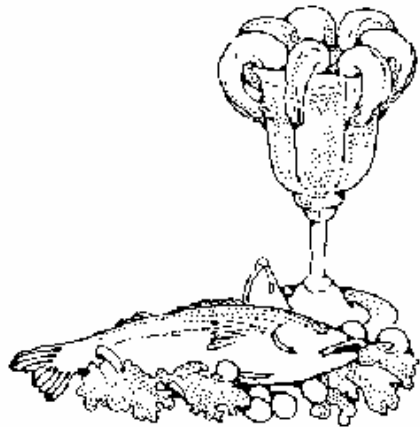
Fish, seafoods, all foods made with seafood, and all other meats, such as beef and lamb, must be cooked to 145° F or hotter to kill the bacteria that cause foodborne illness. Some people like rare beef, and this is the one meat that can be cooked to only 130° F if it is served right away. No raw meat is really safe to eat.

Microwave ovens do not cook evenly; you must stir and turn the food while it cooks to make sure it cooks to the same temperature in every part. Check the food with a metal stem thermometer before you serve it. (Do not keep the thermometer in the food while it is cooking in the microwave oven.)



COLD HOLDING

For cold holding, do not let food stand at **room temperature** because that will allow germs to grow. Store cold foods in a refrigerator or in ice. Always cold hold foods at 41° F or less. However, vacuum packed seafood products in sealed plastic pouches must be kept at 38° F (3° C) or below. Use the metal stem thermometer to check the food in cold holding, for example, in salad bars, areas where you prepare food, and in refrigerators. If you use ice to keep food cold on a salad bar or food display, be sure that the ice comes up to the level of the food that is in the pan or dish. **Food must be colder than 41° F when you put it in the ice.**



THAWING FROZEN FOOD

There are only three safe ways to thaw foods, and you must plan ahead to allow enough time to do it right:

1. Thaw food in the refrigerator; it may take a few hours or a few food below. Placing thawing meat on a lower shelf is best.
2. Hold the food under cool, running water (not more than 70° F), never under warm or hot water.
3. In a microwave oven; you must then cook it or serve it right away.

Never thaw food at room temperature, on a counter or in warm water. These methods let harmful bacteria grow to high numbers (the “Danger Zone”).

WHAT ABOUT FOOD LEFT AT THE TABLE?

When a customer leaves food on a plate or at the table, you must throw it away. If you have food like common bowls of fruit or oatmeal, rolls or bread and some of it is left over, you cannot serve it again. **Unopened** packages of crackers, jelly, candy or sugar may be served again. Condiments such as catsup and hot sauce in bottles may be served again.

Leftovers

If you have leftover food that has not been served, it may not be served again. You will need to make a fresh batch for breakfast tomorrow. The only exceptions would be commercially prepared foods for a continental breakfast like bagels, juice and cereals.

